

KENTUCKY POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1997 (HOUSE BILL 1)

What is House Bill 1?

This legislation, proposed by Kentucky Governor Paul Patton and approved by the General Assembly in a May 1997 Special Session, reformed the Commonwealth's system of public postsecondary education. The overarching policy goal of HB 1 was to improve Kentucky postsecondary education as a means to advance the state's economy and quality of life.

What was the rationale for the reform legislation?

By all national measures, Kentucky's citizens in 1997 were undereducated and trailed the nation in income and health. More specifically, Kentucky trailed the nation and its competitor states in the south and midwest in educational attainment, especially the percentage of the population with baccalaureate and advanced degrees. A March 1997 report of the Task Force on Postsecondary Education concluded that the Commonwealth's postsecondary education system was unprepared to meet the demands of the 21st century's global economy.

What are the statutory goals of House Bill 1?

The legislation, amended in 2000, articulates six goals to be achieved by 2020:

1. A seamless, integrated system of postsecondary education strategically planned and adequately funded to enhance economic development and quality of life.
2. A major comprehensive research institution ranked nationally in the top twenty public universities at the University of Kentucky.
3. A premier, nationally-recognized metropolitan research university at the University of Louisville.
4. Regional universities, with at least one nationally recognized program of distinction or one nationally-recognized applied research program, working cooperatively with other postsecondary institutions to assure statewide access to baccalaureate and master's degrees of a quality at or above the national average.
5. A comprehensive community and technical college system with a mission that assures, in conjunction with other postsecondary institutions, access throughout the Commonwealth to a two year course of general studies designed for transfer to a baccalaureate program, the training necessary to develop a workforce with the skills to meet the needs of new and existing industries, and remedial and continuing education to improve the employability of citizens.
6. An efficient, responsive, and coordinated system of providers that delivers educational services to all adult citizens in quantities and of a quality that is comparable to the national average or above and significantly elevates the level of education of the adults of the Commonwealth.

What were the key features of the reform legislation?

House Bill 1 reconstituted or created several entities designed to provide coordinated strategic planning and educational services. Those entities include the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, the Kentucky Virtual Campus, the Kentucky Virtual Library, and the Strategic Committee on Postsecondary Education. In addition, HB 1 created trust funds to provide financial support for system-building behavior and to build university endowments.

Where can I find more information?

<http://cpe.ky.gov/planning/legislation/default.htm>